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SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT.

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THE RIGHT AND THE WRONG WAY

OF

GIVING PLEASURE.

SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 6, 1869.

"LET every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."—ROM. xv. 2.

THERE are many who live to give pleasure, careless of benefit, and many who seek to instruct without giving pleasure. Either, alone, is imperfect. Of the two partialisms, that is surely better which builds us up in truth, no matter how rudely or ruggedly, or with what harshness and pain. But why should the processes of pleasure-giving and instruction be separated? Pleasure should always carry instruction, and knowledge should always carry pleasure. "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."

Let every one of us. It is not a special duty, then, of certain organizations. It is true that there are some to whom giving pleasure is easy. It is their nature. They are called *agreeable* people. They are so. Without thought, almost, every one likes their presence. It is a great gift of God to be so harmoniously and sweetly organized that your very being in a circle is a benefaction to them. There are others who are disposed to leave to these persons the office of pleasure-giving; as they do song to musicians, and lyrics to poets, and pictures to artists. Yet no man may throw off the Christian duty of conferring pleasure.

But it must not be any or every pleasure. It must be *for his good to edification.* You have not a right to make men happy in any way —to please them in any way. And yet it is your duty to please all men, and for all of you to do it. Not every thing that pleases may

LESSON: Psalm lxviii. 1-20. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 216, 273, 638.

be used, but that only which, while it pleases, also has in it the element of manhood which tends to please the right faculties in the right way. This architectural word *edification*, which means *building up*, is much used by Paul, and is very significant here. Indeed, it may be carried, in its spirit, much further than it was, probably, in intent, by the apostle. It may be said that nothing should go into the construction of a temple which is only beautiful. Mere ornament is in bad taste. But, in building up any part substantially, let every part be likewise tastefully built. Let every part be beautiful; but let the beauty be that which springs from substantial uses. Both use and beauty, joined, should never be divorced.

This command, as a part of common, universal duty, has not been well received. There is even a shrinking from it. "It is the business of religion to save men," some say, "to ennoble them; but not to be pleasing them." There are a great many reasons why men should think so.

Pleasure conveys the idea, as the term is usually employed, of unspirituality. It is a catering to the lower nature. There is so much pleasure derived from men's instincts, their senses, their appetites, their passions—pleasure is so sensuous and self-indulgent and degrading—that it has come to have a bad name among earnest and truly spiritual men. One says, instinctively, "Life is hardly long enough to do the solid and necessary part of duty; and shall we employ its fugitive hours for pleasure, which needs no fostering—which, self-sown, grows like a weed, choking out all useful plants?" Pleasure, in Christian esteem, is at a discount.

The observation of the moral character of those who live to confer pleasure does not seem to mend the matter. Since history began, and the world over, those who have catered to the pleasures of men have been themselves of low moral temperament. It is so yet. Pleasure-mongers are low on the social scale, and they are lower yet on the moral scale. It seems to damage a man's very moral nature to take up the business of furnishing pleasure. Some, in dens, please the cruel passions. Some, in haunts and gorgeous lairs, minister sensuous pleasure. Some, in ways not criminal, minister to curiosity and transient excitement. But while there is a wide difference in the moral standing of those at the top and those at the bottom of the scale of pleasure-mongers, it is still true of all classes whose business it is to confer pleasure merely, that they rank low in moral excellence. Pleasure-mongers, the world over, are of the earth earthy—of the flesh, and not of the spirit. Therefore, when Paul exhorts men to make giving pleasure a part of their duty, many shrink.

Nor, when we look from professional caterers to thousands of persons who are scattered up and down through society, and who make

their way with men by exciting pleasure in them, do we find our scruples at all relieved.

We see men fawning on the powerful. The magistrate has his supple set, who continually are pleasing him, and seeking to gain their ends by keeping him pleased with himself and with them. These parasites study his faults, and use his weaknesses to play upon them. They seek continually to scatter flowers before him, to make his way pleasant, and to make him look upon them as pleasure-breeders. This is the capital which they invest. It is their business which they are seeking to serve, while they are pleasing the strong and the powerful.

Judges have their favorites. These men avoid displeasing them, praise their actions, flatter their vanity, work for their interests, seek to shield them from adverse criticism, ply them with deceitful favors, and all, not from friendship or affection, but for selfish ends of their own. Have you never seen ants swarm over the rosy flower-buds of the opening peony? How they caress it! How nimble are their thousand tickling feet, as round and round the circular bud they go nursingly! Is it that ants love flowers? No! It is that they may lick up the sugary secretion which exudes from the flower-bud. And so there be many that serve men, not because they love them, but because they fain would suck their substance out of them.

Governors and Presidents have their golden fringes too; and clergymen have their sentimental admirers. Society is full of examples of men who are sedulous to please their neighbors. They get as far in the text as to seek to *please their neighbors;* but they go no further. And these examples do not tend to create admiration for this business of giving pleasure.

Beside this, how many cringe before wealth! How anxious are many men who are his supple inferiors to please him who has the golden secret of power! They praise him, and softly rub in unctious flattery. They repeat his limping jests. They laugh heartily at his unfeeling words cast upon the poor. They run to please him. They give up to him the best seat. They serve him with the choicest dishes. They make him an idol, and themselves heathen, without a heathen's sincerity. For, all this they do for their own good, and not for his.

If some gross but capable man has, in the corruptions of time, risen to eminence in the market, there will be found men who, though they know that he is brutal and beastly, though they know his bottomless lusts, his violent and unscrupulous measures, yet will not hesitate to weave continuously apologies, and cast their so-called garments of charity over his monstrous wickedness, and say complimentary things to him, and play jackal before him and monkey behind him; and all for the sake of some advantage which they hope to reap.

But once let November come to him; let the leaves blow off from

his boughs, and where, now, will be all the birds that sung in his branches? Gone—every one of them gone! The only song for him in his adversity will be the sharp wind whistling through his bare branches.

Who has not seen the toady of society—the entozoon—the flatterer, who smoothly glides through household after household, liking all things, praising all things, smooth and plausible, still studying your every whim; placating pride, coddling vanity, and with wondrous instinct, but like the needle, small and bright, carrying the thread of his own selfishness behind him all the time, and fabricating his own interests?

Indeed, when one looks at pleasure, and at the character of so many that live to please their neighbor, it is no wonder that men refuse to listen to Paul in this injunction. It is no wonder that they rebound to the other extreme of gruff honesty, of rude-tongued sincerity, and of rugged truth. Men say, "This pleasing business is demoralizing and degrading. It is better that a man should be square, and honest, and truth-speaking. It is good for men to smart sometimes." And so men crack their tongue, as a driver does his whip; and they have come, at last, to think that the tongue was meant to be a whip.

What, then, is the matter with these pleasure-givers, at whom we have been glancing, that their work is base in them, and degrading to those to whom they pander? It is primarily this: that, in so far as they themselves are concerned, they are acting, not from a moral, a benevolent, or even a generous motive. They are doing an insincere, and therefore an unmanly and degrading work. There is nothing that is more degrading to every generous instinct than for a man to make himself servile to his fellows for the sake of some profit, some deliberate gain. He coins his manhood, and sells it out for base interests; and that destroys any man, ere long.

But more. These pleasure-mongers are wont to select men's lower natures, exclusively, on which to play. Men already have enough strength in their appetites. It is not necessary to gather together more viands in order that you may render more tempting that which already tempts too much. Gluttony and intemperance need no help. They go without crutches in this world, though they bring men to crutches very speedily. And there is no need of seeking to please that which knows how to please itself by the instincts of nature. And yet, usually men please low down. They strike the key of the passions and the appetites. They neglect wholly the spiritual instincts. They do not know them. They work on men's passions. They strengthen and gild all that is evil. They are, therefore, peculiarly demoralizing. Because, if you divide every man

into two parts—below the medium line, the animal; and above it, the mind—they work below the line all the time, and are pleasing the animal taste in every man, making that strong which already needs the bit and bridle; making that rampant which already is unruly; making that fruitful which already sheds its seeds like pernicious weeds in the garden. And one reason why pleasure-making has been so bad to the maker and to the recipient, is, that it has been making pleasure almost wholly out of the lower materials of man's life and nature.

What is the true doctrine, then, in full? *Every one of us should please his neighbor, for his good, to edification.* That is not tautology. You are to please every man for his good, and to so do it that the pleasure shall be conferred in a way to benefit, and not weaken, a man. You have no right, for the sake of making a man happier for the moment, to make him worse permanently. You have no right to lower his moral tone, and destroy his delicacy, and tame him down from heroism. You have no right to make a man less capable as a spiritual being, for the sake of making him temporarily happy, and still less for the sake of making yourselves an interest in him. You are to please every man; but you are to do it for his good. It must be the man's good, and not your own, that you constantly keep in mind. It must become a working instinct in you. Benevolence and conscience must in you have been so wrought together into permanency, that when you approach men to please them, it shall be invariably the instinct of your true manhood to please the upper part of their nature, not the lower part. You have no right to tamper with that which the devil takes care of. A man might please *to good*, and yet it might be merely temporary good, or glances, glimpses, impulses of good. Therefore the idea is carried out and perfectly developed when the apostle says, "You are bound, every one of you, to please your neighbor; but you are bound to please him for his good, and in that part of him which is good; and, more than that, to his edification." It is not to be tickling him in things that are good: it is to be pleasing him in things that are good in such a way that they shall solidify. Your influence on him shall build him up, and make him better. It is a shame for one man to live with another man, and that other man not be able to bear testimony that he is better for it. It is a part of your Christian duty to carry yourself, not only so as to make men happy, but so as to make them happy in such a way as to make them better. That is true Christianity. That is true ministerial work. Every man is ordained to be a minister to those that he lives among, and to preach, not in the sense of exhortation, but in the sense of a living example, so that those around about him are happy, and so that they feel that the

gladness produced in them by his presence is a gladness which works, not downward, but upward; that it cleans them, purifies them, ennobles them, and makes more of manhood in them than they would be able to make in themselves.

Here is the royal career that every man is to run. He is so to carry his thought power, his spirit power, and his social power, that those who are around about him shall be drawn to him by the sweet light of cheerful pleasure that he continually emits. But it shall be a pleasure that by and by shall produce the conviction that they are not only happier than they were without him, but better than they were without him. That which is good is to be touched in them.

There are some natures that have the power of finding out whatever is bad in us. There are some natures that, if possible, will stir up our temper, if we are infirm there. They will irritate us. They will rasp us. There are some natures that know how, if possible, to stir up avarice in us. They will touch it, if it can be touched.

You may take a lily and draw it through the sand, and it comes out clean. Nothing holds to it. You may take a magnet, and draw it through, and out come the iron filings with it. The magnet knows and catches that which is germane to it—that which is susceptible to its attraction. There are some natures that are like magnets, and that touch lust in you. You do not know what it is that affects you. You feel unwashed after they are gone. There has been nothing said, and there has nothing been exactly done. It is that subtle magnetic power which feeling has on feeling. If on one instrument in a room you sound a given chord, every other instrument in that room has a tendency to sound its octave. If you go among men of strong natures, there is a certain vibration in them of a feeling which is strong in you. When you have been with some persons, you feel finer, you feel lifted up. And yet they have not exhorted you. There has been no magisterial instruction whatever given to you. You have drunk the wine of being, and by it you are lifted up and strengthened.

It is the ideal of Christian life for a man so to develop every part of his nature—intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual—that wherever he carries himself, all men shall feel the radiation of the genial, pleasurable warmth of his being, and he shall feel that he takes on a pleasurable excitement, too, in the higher faculties. And then it is a prolonged work, when it is done by character upon character, or by example on example.

Let every one of us please his neighbor for good to his edification. Write that on the wall of your sitting-room. Write it, that parents may know how to take care of their children. Write it in your counting-room, that you may know how to take care of your em-

ployees, and those that are dependent upon you. Write it on the forge, and on the barn, and in the forecastle. Write it everywhere. *Let every one of us please his neighbor for good to edification*—to permanent building up into character. There is the ideal of Christian influence and Christian example.

Consider what a range of keys is opened to our touch. There are pleasures of reason. We are not left to study how we can please men. One would think, rather, that the study would be how not to, so many are the opportunities, and so easy and facile are the methods. There are more pleasures of reason than men are accustomed to think, since they seldom stop to analyze and to determine. And yet there is no pleasure greater than that of the birth of an idea. And the lower you go, the more exhilaration does it seem to produce. Take the plainest unlettered man; sit down with him at his nooning; talk with him of his own affairs; talk not of things in your sphere; "condescend to men of low estate" in your thoughts and feelings, and talk with him about his business; and, if you are informed better than he, seek to develop, out of something that he is accustomed to look upon, or think about, or work in, every day, some principle, some philosophical process. Put him in possession of it, so that it really is his, and see how you have struck a chord far up above the animal of his life; and see what pleasure there is in it.

Why, there be men who so seldom have this pleasure that when they get an idea they never can be done with it. They ride it. Men call it, at last, a *hobby*. But you forget that there is a testimony here to the pleasure which a man gets in a pure idea. Society is full of uncultivated persons that have, in some accidental way, got hold of a theory, a notion, a principle. They do not know all its fellows. They have not the modesty of knowing. Each man has his notion. Sometimes it is finance; sometimes it is physical economy; sometimes it is the reforming of society—a new plan for changing it. There have been more plans, almost, for the reconstruction of society than there have been heads born into society. All uneducated and naturally intellectual natures have an idea, and they think more of it than they do of their work; more than they do of their bread. That is their Sunday idea. It is their sanctuary. They retreat into it. They like to talk about it, and are flattered if you speak of it. They go and preach about it. Sometimes they are combative, and become reformers on the strength of that idea. The reformer is generally a man that has a partial truth, and is disposed to fight with it. You find men of single ideas all through society. Nevertheless, they are men that have *ideas;* and this very crusade which they make is the witness which they have in the commerce

of ideas. And the fault is, not that they have this idea, and are riding it to death: it is that they have not more ideas.

When a physician has a little practice, he goes on foot; when he has a little more, he buys a horse; when he has still more, he gets two horses; but when he has a large practice, he must have three horses; and when he has an excessively large practice, he gets four, five, six, or eight horses. And the larger the number of horses that he has in his stable, the less is he obliged to ride each one. And so it is with ideas. If a man has but very few ideas, he rides one; if he has more, he rides two. And the larger his stable is, the more ideas he has. And the consequence is, he rides each one only a proportional part of the time.

There is a time when this is distinctly developed in children. No person has been an efficacious teacher who has not watched for the "birth of genius," as some call it. You might call it *the birth of thought;* for all children, before learning, exercise the intellect. The child is put to a task which he drudges out, and overcomes, he does not know how. He is dragged into it, and dragged through it. But there comes a time when almost every young, and generous, and well-balanced mind makes a lunge for victory at a problem or some task, which he conquers; and he feels that he is going on from victory to victory. There is elation; there is exhilaration; there is a sense of manhood born in him. He from that moment walks home with a head higher and with a step more elastic; and he feels, "I can learn any thing; I *will* learn any thing." Before, he drudged, and read his book, and could not learn his lesson. He wanted to have the boy next to him tell him the answers to questions; or he read them out of the book. He could not get along; he failed in his recitations; and he got down at the bottom among the dunces. But by and by the blessed hour comes, and he has had a regeneration of the understanding; he has had that fiery moment in which he has felt that there was that in him which was competent to grapple with ideas, and to make them his own. And see now how the child is changed. See how from that moment ambition seizes him. See him go up, step by step, in the class. See how he scorns to be told, and scorns to recite his lesson out of the book. He is disappointed, now, if he is not asked. Before that, he wanted to be passed by when the teacher went round with questions in the examination. It is a blessed hour when the young man learns the pleasure of thinking—the pleasure of overcoming by the intellect the various truths which God has set so liberally abroad in the world.

Now, there is this in every body. Persons may not be able to find it out, but you can find it out for them. And therefore, they who know this should be active among the young, among their com-

panions, and should be striving to cast out lines of thought that shall be perpetually waking up in those round about them the pleasures of the understanding. We are commanded to sing with the understanding; and yet, if we did, four hundred and ninety-five out of five hundred pieces of music that are published for singing would have to go to the dirt. I will defy any body to sing with the understanding the music that is trashily printed and trashily performed, whether it be inarticulate, on stringed instruments, or whether it be vocalized to words. Music has a relation not simply to sensuous pleasure, which is the lowest kind of pleasure, but to imaginative pleasure, and to pleasure of the understanding as well, which it rises up round about as the atmosphere rises round about the pine-trees and the oak-trees on the mountain-side, washing them clean, and making them stand out in majesty and beauty. Music cleanses the understanding, inspires it, and lifts it into a realm which it would not reach if it were left to itself.

And that which music has power to do to the understanding, wit also has power to do; and so has fancy; and so have the feelings. Men talk about *pure reason*. Pure reason is of necessity applied to abstractions and to mere matter; but the vast realm and commonwealth of truth concerns feelings; and the truths of love, purity, patriotism, dignity, aspiration, faith, hope; all great truths which lie between man and man, and which connect man to God; all great truths which have in them heroism to do and to endure—these are truths which are of the very nature of feeling; and a man that does not have feeling can not have power with those truths. It is in this way that feeling ministers to thought and to reason. And in this way, by the use of imagination, by the use of mirthfulness, by the use of humor, by the use of gayety, a man may minister to the understanding, and also to the moral well-being of his fellow-men.

When the young come to me, gay and happy, as if they felt that they were willing, for the sake of not being lost forever, or for the sake of pleasing God, to cut off their locks, to shear off their smiles, and to look hereafter very sober, very downcast, and not any more to be gay, but to be very reserved, to be silent, I say, "Go away from me! I do not want to hatch crows." Not for me are such birds. Birds of paradise I want. I want canary-birds. I want larks. I want singing birds. And you can not have your plumage too gay. Is it your conception of religious duty, that you are to shear off that which God took such infinite pains to make, and to re-create in every generation of men? My conception of religion is to let every faculty effulge, touched with celestial fire. Only let the lower faculties be servants below, and the higher faculties be masters

above, and then let these higher faculties have power to flash fullness and continuity.

If, therefore, you come saying, "Must I, in order to become a Christian, give up art?" I reply that God made art; and if he has inspired you with the power of wielding it, it is your ministration of art to purify, to refine, to ennoble, to please, to cheer men. "But I am a singer," says another. Well, then, both in making poetry, in making songs, and in singing them, God has given you ordination. And in this, I say to you, "Let every man, by his peculiar gifts, please his neighbor for his good." Woe be to that man who writes a song in which sweetness of number, and saliency of imagination, and exquisiteness of figure are employed to make lust hotter, and gluttony and drunkenness more attractive.

Woe be to the man that puts angel wings on devil's qualities. Blessed be that man who knows how, in sacred song and in sweet poetry, to lift up homely cares, and take necessary duties out of their drudgery, and clothe them with these higher pinions and attributes, and make them fly singing through the air above the dust and din below. Blessed is the man who knows how to take these gifts and make mankind happier by them. But what shall wit do? What shall humor do? Please your neighbor not by *double-entendre;* not by applying bad passions to salaciousness. Woe be to the man who can not go by the pellucid stream without putting his foot in to stir the mud from the bottom. Yet there be men who never seem so happy as when they are stirring up the lower feelings and pleasures that nature teaches even the beasts to hide from observation. If you have wit, blight not men with it. If God gave you humor, see to it that by your humor you do not lead men to damnation and utter destruction. If God gave you gayety and cheer of spirits, lift up the careworn by it. Wherever you go, shine and sing. In every household, there is drudgery. In every household, there is sorrow. In every household, there is low-thoughted evil. If you come as a prince, with a cheerful, buoyant nature, in the name of God do not lay aside those royal robes of yours. Let humor bedew duty. Let it flash across care. Let gayety take charge of dullness. So employ these qualities that they shall be to life what carbonic acid is to wine, making it foam and sparkle.

Why, do you suppose that Christianity begins in the Westminster Catechism, and ends there? Do you suppose it leaps from philosophy into philosophy, and disappears? I tell you, Christianity means the totality of man, developed under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is only another word for manhood, carried to its highest pitch.

There is a correlative duty connected with this—namely, as we are

to employ pleasure so that it shall instruct men, we are also to employ instruction so that it shall please men. Both things are true. Although it is not stated affirmatively, it is implied, it is logically inferable, from the command of the apostle. I do not undertake to say that we are never either to do or to say any thing which is devoid of pleasure. A part of the lesson which we have to learn in life is bearing pain. He can never be of the highest type of manhood who seeks to avoid trouble—who lays his plans so as to flank pain. He that takes the line of duty, and persists in that, and when pain must be felt, bears it, and knows how to bear it, is the true man. I would not object to a man's stopping under an oak-tree during a thunder-storm; but for a man to build a house half-way between here and California, and go into it, and stay there, for fear that if he went out he would get wet, would be ridiculous. A true traveler knows how to go in storms as well as in sunshine, though the sunshine is pleasanter.

I would not teach upon the theory that every thing must be made pleasant before the child is bound to take it; nevertheless, the general rule is this, that instruction, throughout life, should be made pleasant. At any rate, it should not be made unnecessarily unpleasant. This is one reason why I hold that much of the instruction of the household is unscriptural. Show me, if you can, in any household, any such mode of instruction as I was subjected to when I was a child. The most absolute abstract views of doctrine were presented to me. If I go to the Bible, I have the parables of Christ, the inimitable histories of Joseph and his brethren, the sweet idyl of Ruth, and the beautiful songs of David. All the way through the historical narratives, I have just that which is adapted to teach the uninstructed mind of the child.

I do not say that these abstractions, and catechisms, and creeds are useless. To adult minds, they are not. The adult mind runs into them necessarily. But to shut up a child on Sunday, and to cram him with catechism, does not do him any good now, though it "*may* by and by."

Suppose a child was on an excursion, and its good mother should be seen cramming into a large trunk cloth and needles and silk in superabundance? And suppose, on being asked why she did it, she should say, "I am going with my child on a picnic excursion?" And suppose, on being still further asked if she was not putting herself to unnecessary trouble, she should say, "By and by the child may find some use for some of these rolls of cloth, and may be glad to get at them." It is true that such a contingency may occur; but would you proceed so in such a case? Men rightly say, "Let the child learn the catechism by and by. Why not wait till it is competent

to understand it?" And I think that to force childhood to associate religion with such dry morsels is to violate the spirit, not only of the New Testament, but of common sense as well. I know one thing, that if I am "lax and latitudinarian," the Sunday catechism is to blame for a part of it. The dinners that I have lost because I could not go through "sanctification," and "justification," and "adoption," and all such questions, lie heavily on my memory! I do not know that they have brought forth any blossoms. I have a kind of grudge against many of those truths that I was taught in my childhood; and I am not conscious that they have waked up a particle of faith in me. My good old aunt in heaven—I wonder what she is doing. I take it that she now sits beauteous, clothed in white, that round about her sit chanting cherub children, and that she is opening to them from her larger range, sweet stories, every one fraught with thought, and taste, and feeling, and lifting them up to a higher plane. One Sunday afternoon with my aunt Esther did me more good than forty Sundays in church with my father. He thundered over my head, and she sweetly instructed me down in my heart. The promise that she would read Joseph's history to me on Sunday was enough to draw a silver thread of obedience through the entire week; and if I was tempted to break my promise, I said, "No; Aunt Esther is going to read on Sunday;" and I would do, or I would not do, all through the week, for the sake of getting that sweet instruction on Sunday.

And to parents I say, Truth is graded. Some parts of God's truth are for childhood, some parts are for the nascent intellectual period, and some parts are for later spiritual developments. Do not take the last things first. Do not take the latest processes of philosophy, and bring them prematurely to the understanding. In teaching truth to your children, you are to avoid tiring them.

You are also to avoid unpleasant association. Make every thing that stands connected with religion just as pleasant as it can be. Do you know what the power of association is? Did you ever study that matter? Do you know how we have redeemed many things in human experience from vulgarity, and made them as redolent as the gate of heaven? For instance, do you know of any one thing that is so gross as eating? When you consider that a man throws into that hole which we call the mouth, chunk after chunk and grinds it, and disposes of it, is there any thing that is more purely an animal operation? And yet, is there any thing more refined or fuller of sweet suggestion than the table? Do we not use that word *table* to signify the blessings of the household? We have so surrounded the table, by conversation, and affection, and the higher offices of life, that we forget that gross fact around which they all of them cohere. These are the blossoms, and that is the root underground, as it were. Do you

consider that this is a single illustration of a principle as broad as life, and that, on the one hand, by association you can make the highest and noblest things most mean and beggarly; while, on the other hand, you can surround the meanest and most beggarly things with the noblest and highest associations?

Which is the most beauteous house in your village? That rich man's house standing in the park, wide built, with wings towering far up to heaven? Imagination always makes it seem admirable to you; but oh! you would go by that house a thousand times, and not experience one single heart-pang. But there is that old rusty brown house, that was once red, down under the hill, with only one floor, and three rooms, and an attic that you go up into by a ladder; and when you see that, it brings tears to your eyes.

Are we set to teach God's truth to the young that it shall please them, or shall we take these divinest truths—truths of love, of victory, of hope, of faith, of manhood, of immortality and glory, of triumph over sorrow, and death, and the grave—and so teach them to our children that their prevailing impression respecting them is, that, next to being damned, it is miserable to be a Christian? A great many feel that they would rather be born again than be lost forever; but only about so. And what a testimony that is to our understanding of the spirit of the Bible—that singing book; that healthy book; that book which has not a morbid spot in it from beginning to end; that book which is full of choirs, full of angel voices, full of inspiration, full of nobleness and grandeur, all the way through—what a testimony it is to our understanding of the spirit of that book, that we make it a battle-field, a Gettysburg, and tramp down flowers and harvests in our rude controversies sect with sect. Ah! there is a fountain of healing, they tell me, at Gettysburg. Blood-soaked it has been. And there is many a Gettysburg where there is many a theological wound, and many a bitter tear. But there is also the healing fountain of the word of God. And I say that it is a correlative duty to please men so as to instruct them, and to instruct men so as to please them if possible. Not that you are always to avoid tasks, and yokes, and crosses; but the predominant tendency, the genius of inspiration, should be, to make instruction pleasant—to make truth seem as pleasant to men as it really is in its own self.

Passing by much, I make a few applications, and close.

I think you can now discriminate very clearly between the two classes of preachers that abound. There is a class in the community who preach to please. That is all they preach for. There is a class in the community who preach to instruct. There is a class in the community who preach that they may instruct. They grow better and better from the first, which is the worst of all. A man that preaches

to please is a poor fellow. He may fare well in this world, but I think he is drawing on his capital, and will not have much in the other! I do not know of any thing that seems more degrading. If a man wants to indulge in levities, or fantasies, or imaginations, let him do it; I am not beset with superstitions. But still if a child would play mumblety-peg, I would not advise him to go into the graveyard and play on his father's and mother's graves. There are proprieties and adaptations; and if a man is called merely to please, if he is to be a pleasure-monger, even of ideas, let him take the lecture-room, or the theatre; let him go where pleasure is the normal end. But to take the Church, to take the crucified Saviour, to take the everlasting issues of human life, and in the midst of these tremendous verities think of nothing but soft sentences, and sweet figures, and sentimental graces, and preaching these short sermons that please every body, and particularly the closing passages of them—this I do not think is salutary. But if there is any case in which it is allowable, it is the case of men that preach for the sake of pleasing, and for that only.

But they are said to be refined. Yes, they are refined. Oh! but they are said to be eloquent. Yes, they are eloquent. Oh! but they are said to be attractive. But when they stand on that awful, final day, between the living and the dead, before God Almighty's judgment, and all God's angels are gathered together, and there is nothing to stand between them and damnation except elegancy, and refinement, and pleasant voices, and words, and gestures—in that hour, will it seem to them to have been worth their while to have bought their destruction at such a price?

Their bad example, with other causes, drives a great many persons to the other extreme. They preach to instruct, and do not care whether men like it or not. Sometimes they are better pleased when men do not like it than when they do. There are a great many persons who seem to think that the doctrine of depravity is to make men depraved, and that they do not preach effectually unless they develop depravity in the congregation. If they preach so as to offend men's tastes; if their preaching is such as to make men's natural affections rebound and rebel against it, they say, "Ah! we have touched the quick. The natural heart does not love the things of the spirit. It is not reconciled to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And when a man preaches so as to bring out the law of God in living colors, the sign that he is faithful, they think, is, that they are mad who listen. And there is now and then a preacher who spends his time, apparently, in using the most tremendous doctrines in the most offensive ways, and who, notwithstanding, preaches to the congregation through his natural term. The young leave him. All the soft-meated people leave him. The tough, the sinewy, the much-enduring, all stay,

until by and by the congregation is all made up of veterans. And at last the man dies. An excellent man he was, it may be; but, misguided, ignorant of human nature, ignorant of the best mode of performing religious duty, he has taken that truth which God meant should walk before men as a queen of light, clad in beauteous garments, and should go singing as well as threatening, persuading as well as commanding, and has preached it so that it walked before men making them feel that truth was skin and bones. A gaunt, skeleton truth he preached. And after he dies, some young man comes and takes his place. Then the young people come back, and men that have hearts, and want to have them fed, begin to return. Pesently, under his preaching, a great and glorious revival of religion breaks out, and the whole congregation begin to be moved and swayed by the truth; and the good old people wake up, and say, "Ah! the seed that our dear father, who is now in heaven, has been sowing these twenty years, has at last begun to come up."

An old farmer who never put a single particle of manure on his farm, but who has planted and skinned, and planted and skinned, until a mullein will not grow on his farm, at last dies. Then a young man comes in, and begins to institute a rotation of crops, and uses fertilizers, and handles ten-acre after ten-acre in a real generous way. Up begin to come great crops of grass, and potatoes, and corn; and the old farmers round about come and lean on the fence and look over upon these crops, and say, "I used to tell Brother Skinflint that after a while his system would produce its fruit!" Now, is this young man reaping the fruit of what that old man did? Is it not true that, another system having been introduced, he is reaping what he himself sowed?

I declare that the truth of God in Christ Jesus, while it leads to great sorrows, leads to sorrows which are the conflicts of men's higher faculties. Therefore, come revolutionary times, when to be a Christian requires a man to sweat drops of blood, and when heroism obliges men to stand for truth and for principle. Therefore, in the life of the church there are periods of darkness, periods of Sinai. Yet, in and of itself, the nature of the truth is beautiful, is sweet, is attractive; and it should, in ordinary circumstances, be so preached that men should think that there is nothing under the sun and stars so beautiful as are the truths of Christianity. And while we are called upon to please every one his neighbor for his good to edification, we are also called upon to edify every one his neighbor to pleasure. It is a poor rule that does not work both ways.

Out of this subject grows the logical connection (you must find it out for yourselves, for I can not stop now to put it into formulation) in respect to friendship, and love, and society.

I conceive that there are few persons who know either the pleasures or the duties that belong to friendship or to love. There are very few persons that are courageous enough, brave enough, to be a friend. If to be a friend means that you shall sit down under the boughs of your friend, as one in summer sits down under the boughs of the generous apple-tree, feeding upon the fruit that falls from its boughs, taking all your pleasure from the tree, and adding nothing to it; if friendship is selecting persons as your associates for the sake of getting pleasure and profit out of them, why, then there are plenty of friends, and there is plenty of friendship. But if friendship means *pleasing for good*, to up-building or edification; if the relation of true friendship is such that you ought to be ashamed to take more than you can give in your intercourse one with another, then friends and friendship are not so common. If your idea of friendship is to be happy without regard to the happiness of others, then there is too much friendship in this world already. But I understand friendship to be something more royal than this. I understand it to be the congress of two natures that love to give. And as it is more blessed to give than to receive, as the recoil of generosity is musical, the two natures, coming together, seek to serve each other, to honor each other, to bear one another's burdens, to enlighten each other, to stimulate each other, to make each other nobler. And if that is friendship, how little there is of it in the world! How many men are degraded by their friendships.

You can not afford to be a friend to any one who leaves slime on you. You can not afford to be the friend of any one who lowers the tone and temper of your conscience. You can not afford to be a friend to any man who, on the whole, breathes malaria into your system. You are to receive from any man who is worthy to be your friend instruction and elevation. If he degrades and lowers you, as you love your soul, break the friendship; for it is foul, pernicious, deadly. And on the other hand, no man can afford to have you for his friend, if the average result of the action of your mind and life on him is not to make him a better man.

But put it higher—put it in the realm of love. Who are true lovers? They that kindle the first novel fires of inexperienced affection—are they true lovers? Infants they are—mere prattlers. Are they lovers that only know the tides of passion? Beasts are mightier lovers than they. Woe be to the poverty of our language, that we have no words to express the differences in the realm of love, from the topmost angelic nature to the poorest and basest nature. One single word is to serve various uses, and impotent paraphrases are employed to eke out intermediate meanings. But not they who have the gush of fancy, and still less they that have the wild flush of

passion, are true lovers. They are true lovers where every faculty in one finds a corresponding faculty in the other; where the understanding and the moral sense of one are enriched by the understanding and the moral sense of the other; where the spiritual affinities of one are strengthened by the spiritual affinities of the other; where the sweet and pure social affections are fed and pleased; where they so stand together, that pride in one says, "I am happy in the other;" and love of praise says, "I am perpetually praised in the other." They are lovers whose concordant, concurrent beings are like two parts of music, rising, and floating, and twining, and mingling to make one harmonious whole.

Love is the river of life in this world. Think not that ye know it who stand at the little tinkling rill—the first small fountain. Not until you have gone through the rocky gorges, and not lost the stream; not until you have stood at the mountain passes of trouble and conflict; not until you have gone through the meadow, and the stream has widened and deepened until fleets could ride on its bosom; not until beyond the meadow you have come to the unfathomable ocean, and poured your treasures into its depths—not until then can you know what love is. It is something grander than enters into the imaginations of unsubdued men that yet all believe, earthy and sensuous. When two souls come together, each seeking to magnify the other; each, in a subordinate sense, worshiping the other; each helping the other; the two flying together so that each wing-beat of the one helps each wing-beat of the other—when two souls come together thus, they are lovers. They who unitedly move themselves away from grossness and from earth, toward the throne crystalline, and the pavement golden, are indeed true lovers.

Father and mother, do you love each other so? Brother and sister, have you Christian love? Newly come, and newly found, is this your ideal of love? Is it some faint, hazy, but beauteous dream? Is it some romance of imagined excellence? True love carries self-denial, labor-pain for another. True love pivots on honor and respect—both self-respect and respect for another. True love thinks; true love feels; true love strives; true love pleases; true love improves; true love creates in the soul of the one loved a higher life. And so, beginning in this world, and loving little and low, men rise up through intermediate stages, until they touch the higher flights. Old age often sees the flame burned out; but the coals that remain are warmer than all the flames were. There is no loving like that which experience has taught, when that experience is ministered by the instruction and wisdom and purification of the Holy Ghost.

Let love, then, minister pleasure; but let pleasure minister profit. *Please one another for good unto edification.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We bless thee, our Father, that thou hast made known to us thine existence; that thou hast made known to us the joyful tidings of thy relations to us, and thy feelings; that thou hast called thyself Father, and so assured to us all the blessings of the household in love. We rejoice now without fear: not without regret and sorrow, because our unworth perpetually chides us. We are perpetually reminded both by weakness and by sin of our unworthiness. Yet so great is thy kindness and thy love, that not all our conscious defect can keep us from joy in the Holy Ghost. When we look at ourselves, we are indeed full of grief; but when we look away from ourselves and toward our God, we are full of joy, we are full of strength. Certainty of the future does not lie in our continuance, but in the greatness of thy watchful care; in thy faithful mercies; in that redeeming love, stronger than death, by which we have been gathered, and nourished, and instructed, and disciplined, and built up into the holy faith. And our confidence is in thee. In thee, O God! we shall be steadfast. In thee alone are we safe. What time we wander from the influence of thy love, what time we forget thee, we are subject to all temptations. Pride destroys us, and vanity weakens us, and our passions take possession of us. Then the garden of the Lord is indeed given up to the wild boar of the wilderness. Then indeed are all fair and pleasant places laid waste. But thou, O God! dost return to our desolation, as the summer sun comes to the wastes of winter. When thou returnest, all things forget to mourn. When thou comest, all things grow beauteous and fragrant. We rejoice in that wonderful power of thy light which gives life, and with life joy—that makes joy a prophet of greater joys yet to come.

And now we pray that, standing between the earth and the heaven, the earthly influences that are seductive and ruinous may grow less and less potent with us, and that all celestial influences that lift us high above the senses, and higher every day, may prevail, and that we may become more holy. Grant that the beauty of holiness may be ours. May our light so shine that it shall seem beautiful to men. May we have this unconscious power. May we be like thee. May we not only go about doing good, and for the sake of doing good, but may our example, all unbeknown to ourselves, lead men to virtue and holiness. We pray that thou wilt help us to resist easily besetting sins, to gain victories over thoughts, and fancies, and imaginations, and vagrant desires, and strong feelings.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt help the passionate, that they may rule their fiery tempers; that they may know how, for Christ's sake, to establish his kingdom in meekness and gentleness in their unrulable natures. We beseech of thee that thou wilt help the proud, that they may no longer have the selfishness that pride generates. May they be less and less cold. More and more may they sympathize with others, and not with themselves alone. May their pride not be broken, but converted, and made, as was thine ancient servant of old, to serve the churches. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt help those that struggle with all the fascinations and glittering vanities of praise. Grant that the love of it, and the idolatry of it may cease. And may it be in their hands an instrument of beneficence, a means of making others happy, and interpreting their desires and wishes.

We beseech of thee, O God! that thou wilt look upon all that are fighting the

battle of avarice; and may they know how, with the sword of the Lord, to slay these dragons. We pray that thou wilt help any that are overmastered, and any that are being cast down and destroyed, by those passions. We pray that thou wilt work mightily for the relief of any hearts that are thus delivered into bondage. We pray that they may be delivered from the power of those temptations and those foul compliances and sins which spring from these fountains. More and more may men turn themselves away from the hatefulness and wickedness of selfishness. More and more may they behold the beauty that there is in true benevolence and goodness. We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that every one of thy people may learn how to adorn the doctrine of Christ in the station where they are. If thou hast appointed some to poverty, may they accept poverty as if it were a flower of the Lord; and may they hold it in their hand, not as if it sprung from the ground, or came from men's devices, but as appointed of God. And may they take it as a charter. And there may they stand to adorn the doctrine of God in their poverty. And if there are those who are in the midst of perplexities and cares, may they learn how to make a garden of this rocky soil, and plant therein some beauteous thing that shall glorify the name of their dear Saviour. May they not seek so much to fly away from their cares as to subdue them and overcome them.

And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt grant to all that are in the midst of sorrows and afflictions the appropriate graces of the ministrations of thy spirit. And may they know how to have a song in the night. From darkness may there come forth those sweet sounds of ecstasy that shall surprise men with the power that God hath to subdue sorrow to the uses of his dear children. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that those under the quick pressure of new griefs, though they bow down their heads, may speedily lift them up again. We behold, when the storm is past, how many things are laden with the rain, and can not straighten themselves up. And yet, when timely winds have blown and shaken off the moisture, how again they become erect, and are nourished by that which beat them down. So may it be with every one whose head droops with sorrows. Now lift the light of thy countenance upon them, and make their very sorrows go to the root and give them sap, in which they may grow in strength and beauty.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt strengthen all in the midst of the duties of life who are performing grave and weighty offices of trust and responsibility.

Grant that they may feel that in their vocations they are serving the Lord. May they be "diligent in business, fervent in spirit," in their service of the Lord. We beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt teach all those who have strength how to use it for others rather than for themselves. And may all that have refinement and graces of the spirit carry these illuminations as so many lights, to show other men the way of virtue and truth. As when thou didst go forth men came to thee expecting some gift of body or soul, so may it be with us. May we follow Christ thus, and attempt to be benefactors to our fellow-men. Grant thy blessing to rest upon this church; upon all the families that are gathered here from Sabbath to Sabbath. And remember any that are with us but not of us—strangers among strangers. Grant that the blessing of our Father may rest upon them. And if they remember the altar where aforetime they have worshiped; if they yearn for the beloved household from which they are separated; and if they look back to-day, homesick and heartsick, still may they be comforted by the Holy Ghost, and find friends among strangers, and brethren among those who are so far away from their kin. And may faith and the blood of Christ be more to them than love and the blood of men.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt grant that all that are upon the sea, all that are in the wilderness, all that are in distant places, and all that are in any danger may to-day have the divine succor, the divine presence, and the divine comfort. Be with all the outcasts; with all children of suffering and sorrow. And if their sorrows and sufferings spring from their faults, teach them better. Grant that they may not be given up because they are bad; for what would have become of the world and of us, if thou, O Jesus! hadst forsaken us because of fault? Grant, O Lord! that we may not wait till they come to us; for what would have become of us, if thou hadst waited until we sought thee, thou that didst go forth to seek and to save? May we seek and save all the outcasts; and bear the Gospel, not alone to those that come to hear, but to those that refuse to come, and stay away.

And we beseech of thee that thy truth may be preached throughout our whole land. May education prevail. May the poor be enfranchised, and lifted through intelligence into true piety, and into strength. Grant that their lives may mean something to them, and more and more every year.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt overrule the destinies of this nation. Save us from materiality, and the worship of the senses. Deliver us from the power of wealth and luxury in overmeasure. Deliver us from misrule and mad ambition of corrupt men. Deliver us from the evils of the flesh. May thy kingdom prevail everywhere, and may all thy will be done in this land.

Look upon the nations of the earth. Pity those that are low, and weak, and degraded; and grant that knowledge and true piety may enfranchise the people. And if there be any that are struggling for their liberty of manhood, and for their right to be, be thou on their side. Lend thine own omnipotent arm, we beseech of thee, to their peoples. May they overthrow their oppressors, and stand regenerated in their own place. And we beseech of thee that wars, cruel as they are, may be nurses which thou dost send forth by which nations are reared Grant that wars may cease to be mere bloodshed—more and more may they become God's discipline. May evils, stabbed, perish. And grant that great deliverance may be wrought out by the sword. And since it has had its time of cruelty, may it now have its time of justice and judgment. And we pray that all the promises in respect to this world may not wither for want of moisture at the root. Remember them, and water them. Cause them to blossom, and bud, and bring forth fruit. Thou long-delaying God, hidden as thou art from eternity, come forth from thy secret chambers to remember the nations and the whole world, and to make haste and bring in the latter-day glory, when all shall know thee, and all shall love thee. And to the Father, the Son, and Spirit shall be praise evermore. Amen.

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Rev. DANIEL CURRY, Editor, *Christian Advocate.*
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Fifty Pianos, Melodeons, and Organs of six first-class makers, *at low prices for Cash*, or one fifth cash and the balance in Monthly Installments. For rent, and rent money applied if purchased. Second-hand Instruments at great bargains. Illustrated Catalogue mailed. Ware rooms, 481 Broadway, New-York.

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We have one of Mr. Waters' Piano Fortes now in our residence, (where it has stood for years,) of which any manufacturer in the world might well be proud. We have always been delighted with it as a sweet-toned and powerful instrument, and there is no doubt of its durability; more than this, some of the best amateur players in the city, and several celebrated pianists, have performed on the said piano, and all pronounce it a superior and *first-class instrument.* Stronger indorsement we could not give.—*Home Journal.*

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Are so effective,
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Call and See them, or send for Circular.

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This Company, organized under the laws of the State of New-York, conducts its business on the strictly Mutual plan, dividing

ALL PROFITS TO POLICY-HOLDERS.

All desirable forms of Life and Endowment Policies are granted by this Company. These are

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Special designs of Gas Fixtures furnished for Churches, Public Halls, Lodges, etc. 3-13w

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Organs, Double Reed, - $125.
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Would respectfully direct attention to his extensive Stock of

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Which for variety, elegance of design, and fineness of quality can not be surpassed in this city.

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Cordial Elixir of Calisaya Bark,

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The CALISAYA (or "King's Bark") is the most valuable of the numerous varieties of the Peruvian Bark; and, in the Elixir, is combined with other ingredients that increase its efficacy, and at the same time overcome the intensity of its bitterness, rendering it a most agreeable cordial.

For persons living in *Fever and Ague Districts*, it will be found invaluable as a preventive—half a wine-glass taken night and morning rendering the system much less subject to the unhealthy influence of the atmosphere.

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Hegeman's Genuine Medicinal Cod-Liver Oil.—Our Oil has stood the test of twenty years, and thousands of patients attribute their recovery to its use. It is warranted pure.

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Cured at once by the use of **Hegeman's Camphor-Ice with Glycerine;** keeps the hands soft in the coldest weather. See that you get the genuine.

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TROY BELL FOUNDRY,

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Of all sizes, for CHURCHES, FACTORIES, ACADEMIES, STEAMBOATS, PLANTATIONS, LOCOMOTIVES, ETC.

Written guarantee with every Bell, to prove satisfactory or be returned and exchanged. Illustrated Catalogues sent free upon application to

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Its Directors are among the first men for character and wealth in the country.

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Its membership is as *carefully selected* as that of any company

It is a mutual company, with the important addition that its directors are all *personally interested* in its affairs, and it treats all its members with EQUAL JUSTICE AND LIBERALITY.

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Its profits or surplus earnings are carefully ascertained annually, and DIVIDED to its members in exact proportion to their contributions thereto.

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It pays every honest claim on its funds with the utmost promptitude.

It resists every attempt to rob its members by dishonest claims, or blackmailing pretenses.

For further reasons, see Pamphlet and Circular, which will be sent by mail to any address if requested.

OFFICERS:

WALTER S. GRIFFITH, President. ISAAC FROTHINGHAM, Treasurer.
GEORGE C. RIPLEY, Secretary. WILLIAM J. COFFIN, Cashier

1-26w AGENTS WANTED.

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Insurance Company of New York

Office, No. 135 Broadway.

CASH CAPITAL, TWO MILLION DOLLARS,
($2,000,000.)

ABSTRACT

OF THE

THIRTY-FIRST SEMI-ANNUAL STATEMENT,

Showing the condition of the Company on the 1st day of Jan., 1869.

ASSETS.

Cash, Balance in Bank,	$145,795 43
Bonds and Mortgages, being first lien on Real Estate,	1,178,965 00
Loans on Stocks, payable on demand,	409,662 00
United States Stocks, (market value,)	1,404,743 50
State and Municipal Stocks and Bonds, (market value,)	451,305 00
Bank Stocks, (market value,)	128,976 00
Interest due on 1st January, 1869,	38,503 17
Balance in hand of Agents and in course of transmission,	95,619 20
Bills Receivable, (for Premiums on Inland Risks, etc.,)	14,000 94
Other Property, Miscellaneous Items,	56,157 85
Premiums due and uncollected on Policies issued at Office,	6,873 40
Steamer Magnet and Wrecking Apparatus,	35,536 81
Government Stamps on hand,	144 00
Total,	$3,966,282 30

LIABILITIES.

Claims for Losses outstanding on 1st January, 1869,	$104,097 48
Due Stockholders on account of 27th, 28th, 29th Dividends,	2,740 00
	$106,837 48

J. H. WASHBURN, Sec'y.
GEO. M. LYON, Asst. Sec'y.
T. B. GREENE, 2d Asst. Sec'y.

CHAS. J. MARTIN, Prest.
A. F. WILMARTH, Vice-Prest.
D. A. HEALD, 2d Vice-Prest.

1-4tmly.